

Fact Sheet

Early Research on the Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination (BRAVE) Initiative

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INTRODUCTION

This fact sheet describes the public’s opinion about the Baton Rouge Area Violence Elimination (BRAVE) initiative, as well as how resident’s trust in police varies by zip code in East Baton Rouge Parish. The public opinion data were obtained from the Baton Rouge Community Survey (BRCS), which was conducted by students in Dr. Fredrick Weil’s Sociological Methods course at Louisiana State University during the Spring 2014 semester.

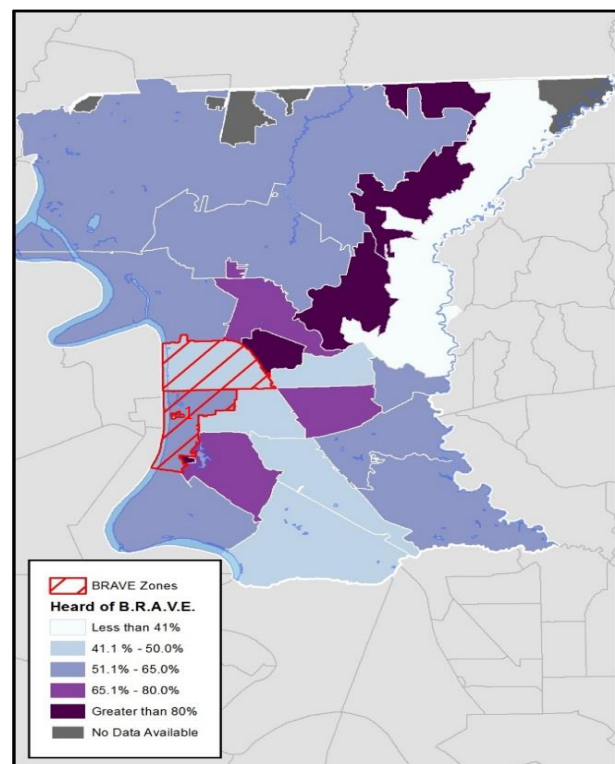
heard of BRAVE. Of the 418 respondents, 57.3% knew about BRAVE. Interestingly, less than 50% of the respondents in the 70805 zip code had heard of BRAVE, while respondents in spatially proximate zip codes were substantially more likely to be familiar with BRAVE. While conducting interviews for a related project, Melinda Jackson (author on this report) found that residents who were familiar with BRAVE typically heard about it through their church or from the media.

KEY FINDINGS

- Many residents have heard of BRAVE
- Of the residents who have heard of BRAVE, most consider it effective in reducing violence.
- Trust in police was high overall, but was especially salient outside of the city limits of Baton Rouge.

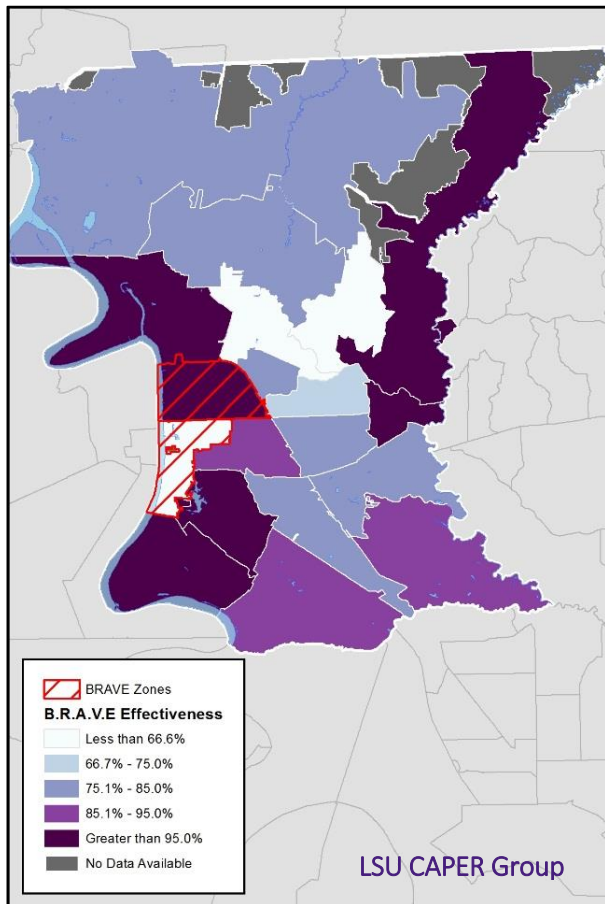
B.R.A.V.E.

The BRAVE initiative began in June 2012. Since, that time Baton Rouge has also experienced a decrease in crime. Little is known, however, about what the public’s perception about BRAVE. The BRCS measured public opinion of BRAVE by first asking respondents whether or not they had



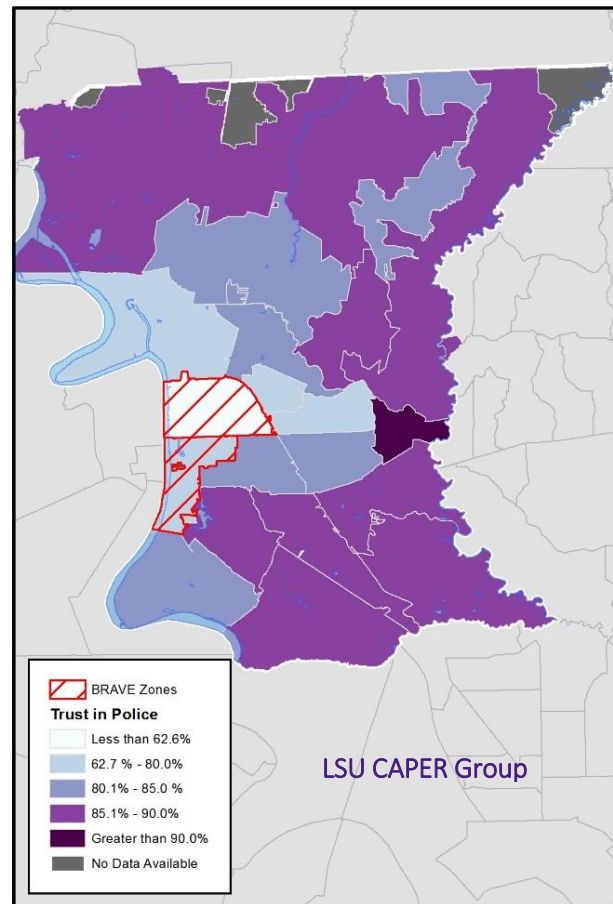
BRAVE EFFECTIVENESS

Respondents who reported knowledge of BRAVE were asked a follow up question about the initiative’s effectiveness. The response categories were: very effective, somewhat effective, not so effective, and not at all effective. Of the 184 respondents, 85.7% responded that BRAVE was effective (either very or somewhat). In the 70805 zip code, all of respondents reported that BRAVE was effective at reducing crime. This suggests that while many respondents in the target area were unaware of BRAVE, those who did have knowledge about the initiative thought it was making strides in reducing violence. Conversely, the respondents in the 70802 zip code, the newest zone included in the BRAVE initiative, were more mixed about the impact BRAVE has at reducing crime. That is, less than 66.7% of the respondents thought that the BRAVE initiative was effectively diminishing crime.



TRUST IN POLICE

While trust in police has been of interest in previous survey years, the results for this fact sheet were limited to those of the spring 2014 survey. Respondents were asked to rank their trust of the police on a five-point scale with responses ranging from “trust them not at all” to “trust them a lot.”



The results suggest a relatively high rate of trust in police, with 83.5% of the respondents indicating that they trust police (either a lot or some). Trust in the police was the lowest in the zip codes containing the City of Baton Rouge. In particular, only half of respondents (52.9%) within the primary BRAVE zone, the 70805 zip code, trusted the police. While respondents in the secondary BRAVE zone, the 70802 zip code, had greater trust in the police (64.7%) it remains substantially lower than zip codes outside of the city limits. Therefore, to maintain and increase its

effectiveness, the BRAVE initiative may want to devote extra attention to developing police-civilian relationships (e.g., using community policing techniques) in the 70805 and 70802 zip codes.

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For more information regarding the survey data on which this fact sheet is based, please see <http://www.fweil.com/s2211/>

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